

TOP TEN Vegetable Variety TIPS

SPRING/SUMMER

Runner Bean (Enorma) SOW APR IN ROOT TRAINERS

Broad Bean (Imperial Longpod) SOW FEB IN ROOT TRAINERS

Pea (Oregon Sugar Pod & Shiraz) SOW APR DIRECT

Courgette (Venus) SOW APR IN POTS, GROWN VERTICALLY

Shallot (Hative de Noirt) PLANT DEC IN POTS

Onion (Hytec) SOW JAN IN TRAY

Lettuce (Butterhead var.) PURCHASE PLUGS MAY ONWARDS

Tomato (Country Taste & Sungold) PLANT INSIDE MAY

Potato (Kestrel) PLANT IN BAGS APR

Asparagus (Gijnlim) PLANT CROWNS MAR

AUTUMN/WINTER

Parsnip (Gladiator) SOW DIRECT IN STATIONS APR

Kale (Dwarf Curled) PURCHASE PLUGS JUNE

Purple Sprouting (Rudolf) PURCHASE PLUGS JUNE

Cabbage (January King) PURCHASE PLUGS JUNE

Beet (Perpetual) SOW IN ROOT TRAINERS APRIL

Brussels Sprouts (Trafalger) PURCHASE PLUGS JUNE

Leek (Neptune & Oarsman) SOW APRIL IN TRAYS

Japanese Onion (Senshyu) SOW AUG IN TRAYS

Carrot (Sweet Candle) SOW DIRECT IN STATIONS MAY

Garlic (Solent Wight) PLANT DIRECT OCT

Growing a Potato in a bag

Planting the potato in a 17 litre polybag

Planting the Potato

- 1/3 fill the bag with multipurpose compost (*a standard Grow Bag will easily contain enough compost to do one bag with some spare*)
- Add an egg cup of fertiliser and mix thoroughly (*potato is a stem tuber so all potatoes will be produced above the original seed*)
- Nestle the potato on the fertilised compost with the chits uppermost (*it is usual to reduce the chits to two in order to encourage strong haulm (leaf) growth. Leaving all the chits on may result in more, but smaller potatoes*)
- Top the bag up with multi-purpose compost (*no additional fertiliser need be added to the 'top up' compost*)

Placing the Bag

- Dig a hole (*or trench if more than one bag*) four inches deep and twelve inches wide
- Fork potato fertiliser into the base of the hole/trench (*about the same amount as you used in the bag, slug pellets can be sprinkled in the trench if slugs are a problem*)
- Place the prepared bag in the hole/trench and pull the excavated soil around the bag (*pulling the soil around will ensure the roots are kept cool*)
- Water well, both in and around the bag.
- Subsequent watering needs to be both in and outside of the bag (*this is to ensure roots are teased out of the bag and into the fertilised trench*)
- There should be no need, but if the potatoes show through before we are frost free protection will be required (*ordinary fleece will be fine*)
- It is a good idea to support the haulms to keep them growing upwards (*this helps the potato grow and keeps the area around the root clear of leaf debris and slugs*)

TIP You could make more holes in the bag in order for the roots to develop and feed externally.

MONTH

BY

MONTH

GUIDE

January Reminders

- Although the soil is too wet and cold for much planting outdoors, there are still some jobs you can be getting on with both indoors and out.
- Sowing (under glass) Broad Beans, Leeks, Rocket, Lettuce.
- Planting Shallots, Onion Sets, Currants, Raspberries.
- Other jobs to consider
 - Check fruit frames and netting is secure.
 - Continue to protect plants from cold and pests.
 - Construct raised beds.
 - Remove old brassica leaves.
 - Start with a the tidy plot.

February Reminders

- February can still be cold, but the evenings are starting to get lighter. A sunny day can fire you with enthusiasm, but don't get carried away.
- Sowing (under protection) Tomatoes, Onions
Cauliflower (direct) Broad Beans, Radish, Parsnips.
- Planting Jerusalem Artichokes.
- Other jobs to consider
Cut back autumn fruiting raspberries.
Lime areas for brassicas.
Apply organic fertilisers.
New woodchip for paths.
Prune gooseberries.

March Reminders

- Now the soil is starting to warm up your allotment will require more and more of your time. Not only will you be able to plant more, but you will need to keep on top of the weeds and pests that enjoy the spring sunshine.
- Sowing (under protection) Celeriac, Beetroot, Lettuce.
Sowing (direct) Peas, Carrots, Spring Onions.
- Planting Cauliflowers, Early Potatoes, Sweet Peas.
- Jobs to consider
 - Hand weed Asparagus
 - Mulch soft fruit
 - Start hoeing!

April Reminders

- The allotment is starting to get really busy now. There is plenty to do particularly if there has been a bad start to the year. The big 'must' is to keep the plot tidy.
- Sow (under protection) Sweet Corn, Runner Beans, all the Cucurbits, French Beans, Leaf Beet. Sow (direct in seed bed) All the winter Brassicas , regular batches of salading.
- Planting Potatoes, Salading for continuity.
- Other jobs to consider
 - Old brassicas out, strip and compost.
 - Clear all winter vegetables.
 - Watch for slugs and snails.

May Reminders

- Don't be fooled by the warm days, the temperature can still drop quite low at night. Make sure tender plants are protected until the threat of frosts has passed.
- Sowing direct from the middle of the month will be fine for everything now.
- Planting remember to 'harden' everything off, don't be in a rush early June will be fine. Buy some herbs to pot on.
- Jobs to consider

Thin out any seedlings to give more space

Stake and protect growing crops

June Reminders

- June is probably the busiest month of the allotment calendar. You will be cropping your harvest on an almost daily basis. This is also the season for strawberries and blackcurrants.
- **Sowing direct** all cucurbits, marrow, squash, courgette, pumpkins and continue with salading.
- **Plant out** all your 'hardened off' plants you have raised or the bought in plug plants.
- **Jobs to consider**
Lift and dry shallots and garlic naturally in the sun.
Cover vulnerable crops with netting.
Mulch where necessary to retain moisture.
Water regularly.

July Reminders

- This is the month you will be wandering up and down the paths with a watering can in both hands, admiring your handiwork and wondering what your going to do with the glut!
- Planting out leeks and winter brassicas.
- Jobs to consider

Important to crop plants when ready.

Hoe regularly to keep weeds down.

Water regularly, good soaks not flash over with the can.

Continue to stake, tie and protect.

Cut down raspberries as soon as they have fruited and tie in new canes.

August Reminders

- Even though you are at the height of summer, you need to start thinking of winter vegetables. As your beds become empty you need to think about rotation and what your going to do next year.
- Sow direct still time for late salading but my preference would be for plug plants.
- Planting Purple Sprouting, Leeks, Winter Cauliflower.
- Jobs to consider
 - Keep on top of watering, weeding and mulching.
 - Stake taller plants.
 - Take tops out of outdoor tomatoes.
 - Lift and dry onions.
 - Prepare strawberry bed and plant new runners.

September Reminders

- You need to try and harvest as much of your crops as possible before the weather starts to turn. Do all of those jobs that need a bit of dry weather, you might not get much more!
- Sowing and planting, not much going on this month unless you try some late salading.
- Jobs to consider
 - Draw soil around celeriac and leeks.
 - Continue to pull out spent crops.
 - Prepare the ground for new fruit bushes.
 - Order your FYM

October Reminders

- Some gardeners start to get the 'winter blues' around now, as the realisation dawns that winters on the way. Even though the weather may be turning there is still plenty to do around the plot.
- Jobs to consider
 - Decide how you are going to store your potatoes.
 - Continue to clear beds, fork over and weed as you go.
 - Start to incorporate organic matter, bearing in mind your rotation plan.
 - Sow green manure.
 - Lift and split rhubarb.

November Reminders

- Your visits to the allotment are probably starting to decline now, especially as the evenings are now dark. Try to stay in the habit of making regular visits to make sure everything is all right and utilise the winter months to make essential repairs to your shed and greenhouse.
- Jobs to consider
 - If its dry, carry on your cultivations.
 - Lift mint roots and divide.
 - Plant garlic bulbs.
 - Consider any major reorganisation on the plot.

December Reminders

- Now is the time to sit back and take stock of what you have achieved. What has been a success, what could have worked better.

You now have another years experience and the knowledge to make changes, choose new varieties and get your timings a bit better.

Job to consider

PUT YOUR FEET UP !!!

TOP Kitchen Garden TIPS

- In my experience the easiest and most productive way of growing vegetables is in raised beds.
- If at all possible keep grass paths and grass borders away from your vegetable beds. Use wood chip or shredded bark for all paths and surrounds; this is a major deterrent to slugs and snails.
- Always try to rotate your crops to avoid build ups of pest and diseases in the soil and to avoid potential nutrient deficiencies.
- When incorporating manure or other organic material, try to get it on to your plot before the turn of the year. My method is to clear the ground, put a thick layer of the material on the surface and then cover it with weed fabric and weight it down around the edge. Let the worms, warmth and moisture do the work before unwrapping it in Feb/Mar and working it into the surface.
- If space allows try to keep an open trench on your plot. It makes a great receptacle for waste vegetation and organic matter which can form the foundation for your peas or beans the following year.
- Keep plans of your plot showing the current years planting scheme, so that you can refer to it when working out your seed order for the following year. I find this helps to jog the memory when the crops are cleared in the autumn.
- Each year try something different. A new variety, a new technique or a vegetable you have never grown before. Never stop experimenting and learning.
- Keep a diary; register the weather, planting times and varieties used. Note your successes and failures; this is particularly useful for beginners to gain experience and ensure you grow what you like eating when you want to eat it.
- Do not rush everything at the beginning of the season, watch the weather forecasts. Plant and sow to suit your needs, avoid gluts but ensure continuity, particularly with salad crops. Don't fill the plot in May; remember to leave space in the summer for those overwintering crops such as Brussels, Sprouting, Kale and Leeks.
- Always keep your plot tidy and weed free. In my experience a clean, well managed plot is always the sign of a good and productive grower.

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